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TREASURY PASS TO FRB SAN FRANCISCO/TERESA CURRAN

EO 12958 DECL: 09/19/2016  
TAGS PGOV, PHUM, TH  
SUBJECT: THAILAND: MY MEETING WITH GENERAL SONTHI

Classified By: Ambassador Ralph L. Boyce, reason 1.4 (b)(d)

1. (C) I met with General Sonthi privately directly after he addressed the diplomatic corps this afternoon. He thought the session had gone well.
  2. (C) I began by asking Sonthi about the audience with the King last night. Who had attended? He said Privy Council President Prem Tinsulanonda.
  3. (C) Turning to the US reaction, I reminded him of our conversation, August 31, when I told him any military action would result in immediate consequences.
  4. (C) Sonthi responded by saying the military had truly acted in order to improve Thai democracy, not destroy it. The prevailing situation here is that the military is the only institution that can be trusted.
  5. (C) Was he going to seize Thaksin's assets? No, he stated flatly. Would Thaksin and his family and colleagues be allowed to return to Thailand?
  6. (C) Why had the military chosen to act at this particular point in time? Smiling slightly, he leaned forward. Thaksin was at his weakest and the military was at its strongest.
  7. (C) Comment ) Sonthi was relaxed and calm. Clearly the royal audience was the turning point last night. (Septel reports Thaksin's defiant speech was a turning point.)
- BOYCE BOYCE